

The Wisconsin Parental Choice

Program (WPCP) allows students who reside in a Wisconsin school district, other than the Milwaukee or Racine Unified School District, to attend any participating private school if certain eligibility criteria are met. The private school, on behalf of the pupil's parent or guardian, receives a state aid payment for each eligible student. Contact the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) for the list of schools participating in the program. You may also access the program's webpage at: http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/choice_programs.

Payment of Allowable Fees

A private school may charge a Choice student reasonable fees for personal items such as towels, gym clothes or uniforms, social and extracurricular activities if the activity is not a part of the required curriculum, musical instruments, meals, and high school classes not required or credited for graduation. A Choice student cannot be charged fees for registration or application to the Choice program, books, teacher salaries, buildings, maintenance, equipment, computers, or transportation if required to be provided or reimbursed by the school district.

Student Eligibility

Students in grades kindergarten through 12 residing in a Wisconsin school district, other than the Milwaukee or Racine Unified School District, may apply for the Choice program at a participating private school during a period the school is accepting Choice applications. Students new to the program must meet the income requirements. To qualify for the program in the 2015-16 school year, a new student must have a family income equal to or less than 185% of the federal poverty level income limits shown below. If the child's parents/legal guardians are married their income is reduced by \$7,000 when determining income eligibility for the program.

185% of the Federal Poverty Level 2015-16 Maximum

Family Size	Yearly Income
1	\$21,935
2	\$29,566
3	\$37,197
4	\$44,828

For each additional member add \$7,631.

All students must apply each year and provide documentation that they meet the residency requirements. Students that participated in the program in the previous semester or students that were on the DPI waiting list in the prior year are not required to provide income documentation.

Special Education Services

A Choice school may not discriminate against a child with special needs during the admissions process or elsewhere. However, as a private school, the Choice school is only required to offer those services to assist students with special needs that it can provide with minor adjustments. Parents should contact the public school district in which the private school is located for more information on the services provided to children with special needs enrolled in the public schools and the lesser services that the school district provides those children enrolled in private schools.

Payment of Tuition – Grades 9-12

Students in grades 9-12 may be charged tuition, in an amount determined by the private school, if the student's family income exceeds 220% of the federal poverty level. Since students continuing in the WPCP or students that had an eligible application and were on the DPI waiting list in the prior school year are not required to provide income documentation, these pupils' income may exceed 220% of the federal poverty level. Applicants with married parents or legal guardians shall reduce their family income by \$7,000 in order to determine if tuition may be charged. Students in grades K-8 may not be charged any tuition, regardless of their income.

220% of the Federal Poverty Level 2015-16 Maximum

Family Size	Yearly Income
1	\$26,085
2	\$35,160
3	\$44,235
4	\$53,310

For each additional member add \$9,075.

Student Participation Limits

For the 2015-16 school year, the program is limited to 1,000 FTE (full-time equivalent) pupils statewide. In addition, no more than 1% of the pupil membership of a school district may attend a participating private school. The schools that participated in the WPCP in the 2014-15 school year will be allocated the same number of pupil slots in the 2015-16 school year. Under current state law, the schools that participated in the WPCP in 2014-15 are to receive the same number of pupil voucher slots for the 2015-16 school year. If more than 1,000 students apply to the program, any remaining voucher slots will be allocated via random draw among the 25 schools that had the most eligible applications.

How to Apply

The first, and possibly only, application period for the 2015-16 school year is from **February 2 – April 20, 2015**. **Late applications will not be accepted for any reason.** If more than 1,000 students apply during this application period, there will be no additional open application periods. Parents must complete the on-line student application available through the following webpage: <http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/wpcp-statewide>.

In addition to completing the on-line student application, parents must provide residency documentation and income documentation (if the application is for a new student) directly to

Open Application Periods

February 2 – April 20

June 1 – June 20

July 1 – July 20

August 1 – August 20

September 1 – September 14

October 1 – October 20

(for 2nd semester participation only)

November 1 – November 20

(for 2nd semester participation only)

December 1 – January 7

(for 2nd semester participation only)

the school(s) they apply to during the application period or their application is ineligible. Parents/guardians may either: (a) provide their social security numbers or taxpayer identification number to the school and have the Department of Revenue determine whether the student is income eligible for the program; or (b) use the Department of Public Instruction's income determination method by answering a series of income

questions in the on-line application and providing paper income documentation to the school(s) as directed in the application during the open application period. The school will verify that the student meets the income requirements. Applicants must also provide proof of residency directly to the schools during the open application period. A student can apply to the Choice program at one or more schools during the open application period(s).

The school cannot use grades, test scores, or other factors besides eligibility for the program in admitting Choice students. It is recommended that parents keep in touch with the school to receive the latest information regarding their application.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q.1 Can the Choice school require fundraising and school service of the Choice parent?

A.1 A school may not impose any penalties on a parent or child in the Choice program for failure to engage in fundraising (which would include any required service to the school).

Q.2 Is transportation available in the Choice program?

A.2 A private Choice school is not required to provide transportation to Choice students. If the school chooses to provide transportation, a fee may be charged. In some cases, the school district will provide transportation or pay the parent a certain amount for their transportation costs through a contract. Check directly with the private school you plan to attend or the public school district.

Q.3 How does the payment process work?

A.3 The state issues payments to the school where the child is enrolled in the Choice program (a check in September and November based on student attendance on the 3rd Friday in September and a check in February and May based on student attendance on the 2nd Friday in January).

Q.4 Is a child in the Choice program at a private religious school required to participate in religious activities or instruction?

A.4 No. If a Choice student's parent or guardian submits to the student's teacher or the school's principal a written request that the student be excused from any religious activity, the teacher and school must honor that request.

Q.5 Are there statutory procedures regarding student suspensions and expulsions that a private Choice school is required to follow?

A.5 Yes. State law requires private Choice schools to have procedures in place regarding student suspensions and expulsions. Parents should ask the Choice school they are considering for their child to provide a copy of the procedures the school has in place for imposition of or appeal of suspensions or expulsions.

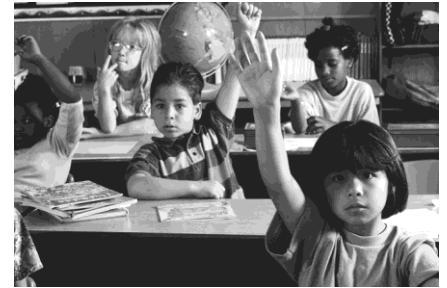
For more information contact:

Private School Choice Programs
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
P.O. Box 7841
Madison, WI 53707-7841
Toll-free: 888-245-2732, ext. 3
Email: PrivateSchoolChoice@dpi.wi.gov
Web site: http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/choice_programs



2015-16

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2015-16 School Year

The Wisconsin Parental Choice Program

Information for Parents

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
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